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ABSTRACT

This booklet describes various new initiatives that the state of New Jersey has launched in the past 18 months, including: (1) proposed revisions of principal certification requirements; (2) a plan for state intervention in deficient school districts; (3) a plan for the supervision of instruction; (4) an adult literacy program; and (5) a plan designed to forge more cooperative relationships between school boards, district administrators, and teachers. The booklet also includes information about New Jersey's ongoing efforts to enchance the teaching profession (teacher's salaries, teacher certification), increase expectations for students, and raise standards for educational leaders. Among these initiatives are: (1) an alternate route to teacher certification (the Provisional Teacher Program); (2) the Academy for the Advancement of Teaching and Management; (3) a more difficult high school graduation test; and (4) efforts to recognize and reward outstanding teachers. (JD)

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Thomas H. Kean
Governor

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NEW JERSEY'S DESIGN FOR EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE:

INTO ACTION

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PREFACE

At a joint session of the legislature three years ago, I said that education had become an urgent issue that, if ignored, would imperil our future. We have been hard at work since then and have earned New Jersey a place at the forefront of the nation's educational reform movement.

Commissioner of Education Saul Cooperman, his department, the State Board of Education, the state legislature and the many others involved in creating our design for excellence did not work in isolation. They worked together to meet the challenges issued by the prestigious national panels which warned of a crisis in America's schools.

The challenge continues. As chairman of the Education Commission of the States and as a member of the Carnegie Forum's Task Force on Teaching, I have spent this past year helping to fashion a continued agenda for reform.

In New Jersey, our educational problems fell into three major areas. There were concerns about the teaching profession, about the expectations for student performance and about the effectiveness of educational leadership.

We responded to these three broad concerns with a design for excellence aimed at preparing our students for life in the 21st century. We have moved from conceptual blueprint to realistic design, and are now constructing the concrete foundations of change.

But we in New Jersey claim no sure or simple cures for educational ills. We proposed our programs after careful study and thoughtful deliberation, and implemented them only after consultation and in-depth discussion with educators, parents, business leaders and other citizens.

Our efforts have turned from drawing boards in the state capital to blackboards in New Jersey's classrooms. And, we are prepared to be held accountable for the results of these efforts.

We are no longer discussing standards in the abstract. Last year, in *New Jersey's Design For Educational Excellence*, a booklet distributed throughout the state and around the nation, I described plans for ambitious reforms that were several years in the making.

Since then, we have translated our ideas into action. Educational reform has become a reality in New Jersey. This year's booklet explains how we have acted to implement the design for excellence, and also outlines the state's new educational initiatives.

Now, with *Into Action*, we have outlined well-defined, carefully operated programs. We have described how the state is helping its school districts, educators and students achieve our shared objective: improving learning for New Jersey's students.

The state has already raised standards, and is committed to action that will move our students and educators beyond bare minimums. If New Jersey is to retain its place as a technological and economic leader, we must ensure that our youngsters master the skills they will need to compete in the complex world of tomorrow.

Tom Kean

Thomas H. Kean
Governor
December 1986

TEACHERS

Recognizing that teachers are the backbone of any educational system, New Jersey has put into action several innovative programs to recruit and train outstanding new professionals. A qualified, well-prepared and committed teaching force is crucial to effective learning and is key to any plan for educational improvement. New programs are designed to ensure a continued supply of talented new teachers and to retain the fine professionals currently in our classrooms.

MINIMUM STARTING SALARY

Low starting salaries, averaging under $15,000 in 1984–85, were one obvious reason talented people were bypassing teaching as a possible career. Because such low pay could not compete with the salaries offered to those entering most other professions, Governor Thomas H. Kean and the state legislature enacted a law establishing $18,500 as the minimum salary for all full-time public school teachers beginning in September 1985.

TEACHING SCHOLARS

In addition to increased starting salaries, the state has begun to attract top high school students to teaching with an offer of college tuition loans to future teachers. The first such scholarship loans of up to $7,500 per year were awarded to 100 academically talented Governor's Teaching Scholars in the spring of 1986, and the program is slated for expansion to include approximately 160 high school seniors in 1987. The scholarship loans, totaling up to $30,000 per student, will be completely forgiven by the state as the students fulfill their promise to teach for a specified number of years in New Jersey public schools.

MINORITY TEACHER RECRUITMENT PROGRAM

In addition to the minority students participating in the Governor's Teaching Scholars Program, minority students who want to teach are being recruited through a pilot program launched at Jersey City State College in the summer of 1986. These high school juniors spent the summer sharpening the skills they will need to meet college academic requirements. Like the Governor's Teaching Scholars, the minority teaching candidates will be eligible for college tuition loans of up to $7,500 per year, to be forgiven by the state as they teach in New Jersey public schools.

TEACHER CERTIFICATION

When the State Department of Education examined the challenge of recruiting the talented teachers needed to teach tomorrow's students, two major problems emerged. First, many teachers now in the classroom are likely either to retire or change careers in the next decade. Second, the quality of students preparing for teaching careers in traditional college training programs was declining. Those who

planned to major in education scored among the lowest of all college groups on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). Furthermore, once enrolled in teacher preparation programs, the students were spending most of their time studying educational theory. Little emphasis was placed on the subjects they planned to teach.

New Jersey responded to the need for more and better qualified teachers in two ways. While moving aggressively to attract additional teachers to the profession, the state also ensured that all new teachers would meet rigorous, meaningful standards for training and licensing. All applicants for certification are now required to hold bachelor's degrees and pass standardized subject-area competency tests, regardless of whether they are trained through the strengthened traditional college programs or the state's new alternate route to teacher certification.

In addition, New Jersey further raised classroom standards by virtually eliminating substandard "emergency certification," which for more than 40 years had allowed districts to hire almost anyone to teach, regardless of previous experience or educational qualifications.

- **COLLEGE TEACHER TRAINING** — Finding a lack of consistency and rigor in college teacher preparation programs, the State Department of Education acted with New Jersey colleges to improve teacher training. Academic standards were raised. At the same time, the state acted to reduce the proportion of required education courses in order to allow students more time to focus specifically on the subjects they will be teaching. However, the prospective teachers must also study the essentials of fine teaching, as identified for New Jersey by a panel of nationally recognized experts headed by Dr. Ernest Boyer, president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.
- **THE "ALTERNATE ROUTE"**— Probably the most innovative and exciting way New Jersey has responded to the projected shortage of teachers has been to increase the pool of available teaching talent through the Provisional Teacher Program, or alternate route to certification. Begun in September 1985, the program opened the classroom door to college-educated professionals who want to teach but lack the college training in educational theory that is usually required for certification. As of June 1986, 184 new teachers had been hired under the program by 70 school districts and nine private or parochial schools in 19 of New Jersey's 21 counties. Of these, 20 percent are teaching math, 22 percent are teaching science and 34 percent are seeking elementary certification.

  Thus, the alternate route is helping New Jersey meet the need for qualified math and science teachers at a time when other states face increasing shortages of instructors in these areas.

  Provisional teacher candidates must hold undergraduate degrees in appropriate subject areas, pass competency tests in the subjects they plan to teach

and be hired by school districts. During the first year on the job, teacher candidates must complete state-approved training programs, after which they become eligible to be considered for full state certification.

Recruiting talented new teachers is only part of the plan. Increasingly, fine professionals have been leaving the field for more lucrative and prestigious jobs in business and industry. While New Jersey has acted to raise standards, it also recognized that if talented people are to remain in the profession, they must be offered financial incentives, professional recognition and opportunities for professional renewal. That is why New Jersey is listening closely to what its teachers have to say. Governor Kean and Commissioner Cooperman meet regularly with groups of educators to seek their ideas on school reform. New Jersey is also stressing teachers' status as professionals and acting to recognize and reward the many outstanding teachers already at work in its classrooms.

GOVERNOR'S TEACHER RECOGNITION PROGRAM

New Jersey has put into action several programs designed to commend its many fine teachers. In May 1986, approximately 1,300 outstanding teachers from nearly 350 school districts were honored at the Governor's Convocation on Excellence in Teaching. Each teacher's district was awarded a $1,000 grant from Governor Thomas H. Kean, to be used for educational programs designated by the selected teacher.

TEACHER SYMPOSIUM

Of these exemplary teachers, 100 were further honored with invitations to attend the Commissioner's Symposium for Outstanding Teachers in August 1986. The three-day symposium offered an opportunity for teachers to share ideas, exchange information and to meet and interact with their colleagues and prominent state and national educational leaders.

TEACHER GRANTS

Recognizing that creative teachers are constantly developing effective ways to improve their students' learning, the state offered grants of $15,000 each to individual teachers, or groups of teachers, who designed effective classroom strategies. Thirty grants were awarded to 46 teachers who are now working to share their winning strategies with other teachers around the state. The grant program will be continued on an annual basis.

THE ACADEMY

The Academy for the Advancement of Teaching and Management opened its doors to teams of teachers and their building principals in January 1985. Eighteen months later, more than 1,500 educators had been trained at the academy.

With the expansion of staff and facilities at the academy's Edison headquarters in 1985–86, the initial core of courses focusing on teaching techniques was enlarged to include courses for supervisors and administrators. Besides enhancing its major mission of improving the effectiveness of New Jersey's schools, these expanded offerings for educators help the academy to advance its secondary purpose of increasing communication and collegiality among teachers, supervisors, and building and district administrators.

In the spring of 1986, a panel of state and national education leaders outlined for New Jersey a plan for the effective supervision of instruction (see page 15 for more information). The academy's existing course on supervision of instruction will be expanded based on the recommendations of this panel.

Even if the academy could reach all of the state's educators, it would not substitute for effective staff development at the local level. Therefore, the academy will also launch an initiative that will encourage the appointment of a staff development leader in every interested school district. The responsibilities of these district staff development leaders will be similar to those of corporate instructors. They will spend at least 50 percent of their time working with local teachers and administrators to help improve their instructional and supervisory skills. While these staff development leaders will be autonomous within their districts, they will benefit from the centralized preparation and networking opportunities at the academy.

DISTRICT COOPERATION

In effective schools, teachers and administrators agree on shared goals, objectives and priorities. Because they work most closely with students, teachers know most about the obstacles to learning. They should therefore be involved in basic decisions about teaching and student learning.

Frequently, perhaps due to adversarial bargaining relationships, our schools lack the desired degree of cooperation. Therefore, the Department of Education is proposing a pilot program under which nine districts will work to define and implement ways to build more cooperative relationships. The department will help the school boards, administrators and teachers in these districts work together to improve the organizational climate of their schools. The procedures these pilot districts use to increase cooperation will eventually be shared with districts around New Jersey.

STUDENTS

The educational initiatives already described outline the ways New Jersey has acted to enhance the teaching profession. These reforms will ultimately raise classroom standards and improve the learning experiences of students. But New Jersey has not stopped with demanding more from those who deliver educational services. The state has also raised expectations for the students themselves and is acting to help districts ensure that their students are prepared to meet the challenges of those higher standards.

BEYOND BASICS — THE HSPT

If New Jersey's young people are to be prepared to succeed in an increasingly complex and technological world, schools must constantly challenge them to strive for their highest levels of achievement. Academic standards must be reasonable and fair, yet rigorous enough to ensure that a high school diploma means graduates can read, write, compute and reason at levels that will allow them to function independently and productively in the 21st century.

All too often educators have been told by employers, colleges, the armed forces and prestigious national panels that students in New Jersey and around the nation are graduating from high school without the necessary abilities to think critically, write clearly and apply mathematical computations.

New Jersey took the first step toward ensuring that its graduates were prepared for the world of work and college when it instituted the Minimum Basic Skills (MBS) test in 1978. The test became one of New Jersey's requirements for graduation in 1984–85.

But the MBS test was just a *first step*. It measured only *minimums*, not the skills needed to compete in today's technological society. Therefore, the State Board of Education acted in 1983 to raise New Jersey's expectations of its students. The state board voted to replace the MBS test with the more demanding High School Proficiency Test (HSPT). The new test became a graduation requirement for students in the 1985–86 ninth-grade class, who must pass it in order to earn diplomas in 1989–90.

Developed with the assistance of a broad-based panel, the HSPT measures only ninth-grade skills. But, it is a tougher test than the MBS. It measures more complex skills, such as the ability to interpret reading passages, solve multiple-step math problems and write a coherent essay.

It is the responsibility of each local school district to prepare its students for the more demanding test. However, the State Department of Education has helped the local districts as they ready their students to meet the challenge. The department has:

- ☐ Provided educators with skills arrays and curriculum guides to help them align their educational programs with the demands of the tougher test;
- ☐ Prepared more than 25 publications and information packages for students and teachers, including sample tests and

guides for skills improvement;
- Offered training assistance for teachers and administrators;
- Put into action several special summer programs for students in selected districts who are at risk of failing the test. For example:
  —The department, recognizing that the tough new test would pose a problem to a number of vocational students, implemented a Summer Work Study Vocational Program in 1985 that included a basic skills instruction component.
  —The department expanded that concept in 1986 with state-funded remedial programs in 17 urban districts and three vocational schools for incoming 10th grade students who did not pass the test on the first attempt. The program includes follow-up during the regular academic year.

Expanding upon its policy of providing state aid for compensatory education, the state plans to spend roughly $158 million in 1986–87 to pay for remedial programs geared to help those students identified as weak in one or more testing areas. After completing remedial courses, those students who did not pass on the first attempt will have the chance to retake and pass the proficiency test, as needed, in grades 10, 11 and 12.

INCENTIVES FOR BASIC SKILLS IMPROVEMENT

A new program, the Incentives for Basic Skills Improvement Program, is designed to reward schools for improving the basic skills performance of their students. Ordinarily, state basic skills funding is geared to students needing remediation. When schools improve the basic skills performance of these students, funds are withdrawn. This new program rewards success. Schools that increase the number of students meeting or exceeding minimum state basic skills standards beyond expectations will be rewarded with money to enrich basic skills programs. In the fall of 1988 the state will begin to offer per pupil allocations to schools that in 1987–88 increased their student skills performance beyond their 1986–87 test performance.

BILINGUAL EDUCATION

New Jersey has also acted to ensure that students with limited proficiency in English achieve high standards. The goals are to maintain the integrity of the high school diploma and, at the same time, facilitate the students' success in an English-speaking society. The state is committed to helping bilingual students prepare for the work world or post-secondary schooling.

Research has shown that it takes most people two to three years to learn a new language and function at a basic level, and two more years to become fully proficient. Non-English speaking students who enter New Jersey schools *before the ninth grade* are expected to meet all diploma requirements, including passing the graduation test in English.

At the same time, New Jersey recognizes that students with limited profi-

ciency who enter our schools *after grade eight* must be allowed some flexibility in demonstrating their mastery of basic skills. If they cannot pass the High School Proficiency Test in English, these students will be required to pass a test of English fluency beginning in 1988–89. However, they may have their reading, writing and math skills evaluated in a Special Review Assessment (SRA) in their native language.

In addition to setting high standards for its bilingual "transitional programs," New Jersey is one of four states in the nation now participating in a "structured immersion" pilot program in which classes for selected limited English proficiency students are conducted almost exclusively in English.

■ **BILINGUAL CERTIFICATION** — Faced with a shortage of qualified bilingual and English as a second language (ESL) teachers, New Jersey has acted to increase the pool of qualified bilingual teaching candidates and eliminate substandard emergency teaching certificates. Following the successful first year of its Provisional Teacher Program, the state is developing a proposal to expand its alternate route to certification to include special plans for bilingual teachers.

One way New Jersey is helping those teachers meet higher standards is with special language training courses begun in the summer of 1986. The Intensive Language Institute offers classes to prospective teachers of bilingual education and English as a second language on six college campuses around the state. Designed to improve spoken Spanish and English skills, the courses are also geared to help bilingual teachers who currently hold emergency certificates earn the standard certification they need to remain in their teaching posts.

STUDENT BEHAVIOR

Higher academic standards alone are not enough to guarantee improved learning. Opinion polls show that school discipline is a major public concern and research indicates that clear behavioral guidelines are one key to a school's effectiveness. Therefore, New Jersey has responded with raised standards for student behavior. The message has gone out loud and clear to students: "New Jersey will not stand for chronically disruptive behavior because you impede not only your own achievement, but the success of your classmates."

■ **CODES OF CONDUCT** — In 1980 the State Board of Education adopted a resolution encouraging district boards of education — in cooperation with teachers, students and parents — to develop policies with respect to student rights and responsibilities, and to develop student codes of conduct. The state has since urged districts to update their policies or make them more stringent, so that the rules which govern the behavior of students, and the responsibilities of the staff and parents for enforcing these rules, are clear to all.

The state monitoring process requires

all districts to identify and respond to students who disrupt the educational program. In addition, an advisory panel of educators, parents, students and legislators developed a model by which local districts might involve the community in outlining their expectations for student behavior. The process and a sample list of acceptable types of student behavior were endorsed by the State Board of Education in September 1985 and sent to each of the state's school districts. The project, co-sponsored by the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association, was designed to guide local districts in developing their own clearly defined standards for student behavior.

- **GRANTS FOR REDUCING DISRUPTION** — The state has put into action a $1 million grant program to reduce student disruption and encourage local districts to develop alternative school programs for chronically disruptive students. Six competitive grants were awarded to 17 districts in April 1986 to fund pilot projects. These programs are designed to teach troubled students responsible behavior as well as the basic academic skills they need to complete high school and pursue meaningful employment or further education.

- **PROGRAMS FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS** — New Jersey has also put into action a program designed to reduce discipline problems among special education students in the secondary grades who are classified as emotionally disturbed. The 1985–86 school year was the second full year of the three-year pilot program designed by the department's Division of Special Education to improve school attendance, basic skills and student employability.

10,000 JOBS

As New Jersey moves to raise high school graduation standards, a growing number of well-prepared students will increase the demand for jobs, especially in urban areas. At the same time, employment opportunities will provide an incentive for students to meet these stiffer requirements and earn their diplomas. Therefore, the state is proposing a program that would place 10,000 urban high school graduates in full-time jobs by 1992. The program would offer employers an economical way to recruit a well-prepared labor force and would give students a tangible goal for which to strive.

These jobs and students already exist. The program aims to coordinate — among employers, schools and state agencies — the placement of qualified high school graduates in these positions. Major employers will be asked to identify entry-level jobs. Our schools are already working to better prepare students for employment with more rigorous academic programs. In addition, participating schools will offer employability skills courses, which will be critical to the graduates' success on the job.

ADULT LITERACY

Approximately 14 percent of New Jersey's adults are functionally illiterate, but only a small fraction of these 700,000 are enrolled in reading programs. The national and state-level Project Literacy U.S. (PLUS) campaigns launched in September 1986 are expected to increase public awareness of illiteracy and increase demand for adult reading programs. The Department of Education is proposing to meet that demand by recruiting volunteers to participate in a statewide network of literacy tutors.

Ten corporations, including state government, will be enlisted to recruit a base network of 100 employees each to serve as literacy tutors. The state will develop a model recruitment program, which will allow local agencies throughout New Jersey to replicate state and corporate recruitment projects. With the help of this model, local groups, such as churches, service clubs and civic organizations, will recruit and train the tutors who can reach out and teach reading skills to tens of thousands of illiterate adults around the state.

GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL PROGRAM

Every summer, talented New Jersey high school juniors spend a month of concentrated study at one of three Governor's schools. These schools, which focus on science, public policy and the arts, provide an outlet that satisfies the curiosity and challenges the intellectual capacity of the state's brightest high school students.

A cooperative venture of the departments of Education and Higher Education, the Governor's School Program also allows students from disparate backgrounds to learn and live together. The three schools are located at Trenton State College, Monmouth College and Drew University.

EDUCATIONAL LEADERS

New Jersey is still building upon its design for excellence with new reforms. Higher standards are meaningless unless the state ensures that its nearly 600 school districts, as well as its teachers and students, are rising to the challenge. Governor Kean and the State Department of Education have proposed a comprehensive plan for state intervention — and, if necessary, state takeover — in deficient school districts. New Jersey has also put into action programs to help improve the state's urban schools. In addition, the state is studying the certification of school principals and shaping an initiative that will ensure they are properly prepared for their essential roles as managers and leaders.

STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Improving the department's performance was the first essential step toward improving educational standards in New Jersey schools. A comprehensive reorganization of the State Department of Education, completed in 1983, streamlined and targeted its operations. Selected as a model by the American Society For Public Administrators, the reorganization was outlined at the group's national convention in the spring of 1986.

STATE ASSISTANCE TO SCHOOL DISTRICTS

In accordance with its mission to improve student learning, the State Department of Education created three regional curriculum services units (RCSUs) which function as vital links between the department and local districts. The regional offices — located in the northern, central and southern regions of the state — assist the local districts by providing both training and materials. They also serve as networking outlets through which districts can share their successful programs.

REVIEW AND REGULATION OF DISTRICTS

In August 1983, the State Board of Education adopted a revised system of monitoring school districts to ensure that they meet standards for state certification. This process replaced an annual review of over 300 items with a streamlined, comprehensive certification review which focuses on 51 key factors within 10 basic areas — such as financial management, facilities planning, curriculum and basic skills achievement.

Districts that meet the state monitoring standards are certified for five years, freeing local administrators from cumbersome paperwork and allowing them more time to concentrate on the educational bottom line of improved student learning. At the same time, the new plan allows state officials to focus their efforts on those districts having difficulty meeting the certification requirements.

In addition to ensuring that each of the state's school districts meets consistent standards, the monitoring process also requires that each district annually make public its

educational objectives, how it plans to meet them and the results of those efforts. Every district in the state will be evaluated under the revised system by December 1986.

INTERVENTION IN DEFICIENT SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Nearly 90 percent of the districts monitored since January 1984 were certified for five years. The remaining districts were placed at the second level of monitoring and directed by the state to develop plans for correcting their own deficiencies. The majority of those districts later achieved certification.

However, a small number of districts have been unable to correct serious problems on their own. Therefore, New Jersey has responded with a comprehensive and systematic plan for state intervention — and, if required, state takeover — in districts that fail to provide the thorough and efficient system of education the state constitution guarantees to all students.

Under the intervention plan being considered by the legislature in the fall of 1986, a handful of districts that repeatedly fail to correct their problems could be brought under direct state control. If the State Board of Education votes to establish a state-operated school district, a state district superintendent would assume control of the district until its deficiencies are corrected and local control is restored.

Such a takeover is an action of last resort. It is an emergency response to a crisis. New Jersey remains committed to local educational control and to allowing districts to meet state standards themselves during the regular and extended monitoring processes. However, it is ultimately the state's responsibility to ensure that every child in New Jersey is offered a "thorough and efficient" educational opportunity.

URBAN INITIATIVE

The Urban Initiative — a compilation of programs aimed at helping our urban schools address the persistent and difficult problems they face — was put into action in 1985-86. The three urban districts participating in the targeted Operation School Renewal program launched their individual efforts to:

- ☐ Improve basic skills and test scores in mathematics, reading and writing;
- ☐ Improve student attendance;
- ☐ Reduce disruptive behavior;
- ☐ Increase youth employment through vocational training; and
- ☐ Increase the effectiveness of building principals.

The three districts started summer courses for students at risk of failing the HSPT and created alternative programs for chronically disruptive students. They provided in-service training for teachers and principals. The districts also began placing greater emphasis on teaching job skills and are stepping up efforts to help students gain employment after graduation.

The first evaluation of the three-year

program has been completed by a team of experts from Rutgers University.

Under the broad-based component of the project, the majority of the state's 53 other urban districts are participating in one or more pilot programs addressing similar issues.

Since 1984, the state has doubled the number of urban sites where programs providing academic and vocational training are available to young adults who dropped out of high school. Further expansion of this program is planned for 1986-87.

EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS

Research has clearly defined factors that create an effective school and encourage students to learn. The state has begun a grant program designed to help individual schools translate these principles — such as strong school leadership, focused assessment and the cohesive involvement of parents, teachers, administrators and board members — into specific action.

These awards, the first of three rounds of grants expected to be awarded through New Jersey's Effective Schools Initiative, are designed to help individual schools implement programs based on effective schools research. In May 1986, 17 individual urban, suburban and rural schools at both elementary and secondary grade levels were awarded a total of $500,000 in grants. These schools will become demonstration centers that serve as models for helping other schools to become more effective. Legislation to provide an additional $500,000 for the program in 1987 and 1988 will be recommended.

PRINCIPAL CERTIFICATION

Recognizing that effective leadership is at the heart of an effective school, New Jersey is turning its attention to school principals — their roles, their preparation, and the means by which these school leaders are certified. Unstructured and arbitrary for many years, these elements would be defined and prescribed under a proposal for revised principal certification.

The current certification system requires neither consistent preparation nor consistent qualifications. Aspiring principals need only collect the required number of courses to qualify for a crucial management position, and this does not necessarily prepare them for their roles as school executives and leaders.

Under the plan introduced in November 1986, each school principal would be required to hold a master's degree in a field of management science. Candidates would have to pass a state-administered written exam and undergo a management skills evaluation at a state regional assessment center.

The existing requirement that all principals be certified teachers with at least three years' experience would be eliminated under the proposal. Instead, principal candidates would complete an internship program focused on elements to be defined by a special panel.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In 1985–86, New Jersey began to focus on management skills by co-sponsoring with New Jersey Bell courses that were highly rated by the administrators, principals and teachers who attended.

In addition, the Academy for the Advancement of Teaching and Management will expand its focus on training for district managers with a new four-day residential program for administrators. The course will be offered to district teams that include the superintendent and at least two other administrators beginning in January 1987. The program is designed to improve management and supervisory skills.

PLAN FOR THE SUPERVISION OF INSTRUCTION

Supervising and guiding the teaching staff is one of the most important aspects of a principal's job. Yet, in many school districts, the process of supervision is not given the priority that is needed.

Therefore, a panel of national educational experts as well as practitioners from New Jersey schools met in April 1986 to devise New Jersey's Plan for the Supervision of Instruction. The panel's report, presented to the State Board of Education in the fall of 1986, focused on three basic elements:

- ☐ Descriptors of effective teaching that principals and supervisors can be trained to recognize and assess;
- ☐ State-sponsored training and assistance opportunities for principals and supervisors; and
- ☐ Procedural guidelines for development of a local supervisory model.

Local districts can use the broad descriptors outlined by the panel as a basis for defining their own specific indicators of good teaching. Then, local officials can incorporate the panel's general guidelines for classroom observation, frequent interaction with teachers and other elements, to develop their own models for supervision.

In addition, the Academy for the Advancement of Teaching and Management provided voluntary training for local school district supervisors beginning in the fall of 1986.

PLAN TO REVISE SPECIAL EDUCATION

New Jersey is moving to revise special education, based on the findings of the Commission to Study Special Education in New Jersey. Slated for implementation as a pilot project in 10 districts in 1988–89 and 1989–90, the Plan to Revise Special Education in New Jersey is designed to focus evaluation procedures on each student's instructional needs rather than on diagnostic categories. It would also establish school resource committees to use general education resources to help students with educational difficulties. In addition, the plan would provide current year funding that is based on program costs rather than the number of students enrolled.

CONCLUSION

New Jersey's design for excellence is a carefully fashioned plan for educational improvement. Our reforms are real. They are in action today, building educational foundations for tomorrow.

But New Jersey is equally committed to evaluating and following up these reforms. The self-scrutiny, debate and planning from which these reforms were born cannot end now. We must continue to adjust and refine our programs, and to develop new initiatives, as needed, to improve our schools further.

With our design for excellence, New Jersey is dedicated to improving educational opportunities for our children. We have transformed our initial design into reality, and we must continue to strive for quality in our schools. Our action now will shape the future of our youth, our state and the whole of society.

NEW JERSEY STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
225 WEST STATE STREET, TRENTON, NEW JERSEY 08625